

girl became straightway infatuated about the handsome stranger, and Fosdyke, who spoke French fluently, took malicious pleasure in annoying the pretty prude, as he classed Yvonne, by flirting with Madeleine.

No wonder, therefore, that the girl should have longed for her father's company and protection; though she looked at him now with an air of bewilderment.

"You know something of him, then?" she said, searching the worn face with anxious eyes.

"I know his name. I attended his mother's wedding. Indeed, why trouble to conceal the fact that it was then I first saw your mother? She was a bridesmaid, a girl of fourteen, and already notable as a musical prodigy. I did not meet her again for six years, when her voice had given way, and she began to dabble in art. Mr. and Mrs. Fosdyke brought their little son to our wedding. He was an extraordinarily pretty child, and almost attracted more attention than the bride."

Ingersoll spoke in the tone of one who was recalling the past without pain; but his glance followed the last stragglers of the procession to Nizon, Nizon, with its finely carved Calvary, and its high-perched stone cross bearing the tortured body of the Christ.

"Father dear," cried Yvonne impulsively, "I have made up my mind. You are powerless; but I can act. I will not have you harrowed and wounded at every turn. You and I, together with Lorry and Peridot, saved my mother's life. She must repay us by the only means she possesses,—by conferring the freedom of our own small Paradise."

"Yvonne," he sighed, "some day soon you will be marrying."

WHEREAT the girl almost laughed.

"No matter what happens, that is the last thing I should dream of doing," she said.

"But why? It is the one thing that a girl of your age should have mainly in mind. Even in this small community you might find a most excellent and chivalric husband—"

"Meaning Lorry," said Yvonne without hesitation.

"Well—yes."

"But—I don't care for Lorry—in that way."

"Has he ever asked you?"

"No. Once or twice, perhaps, he has hinted that Barkis was willing. The last time was no later than the day of the wreck."

"And what did you say?"

"I was nearly angry with him."

"You would prefer him, I suppose, to a man of the Rupert Fosdyke type?"

"I loathe the sight of Rupert Fosdyke!"

"How has he offended you?"

"In no way that I can put into words. He is very courteous, and quite a clever talker, and he tries to make every woman he meets believe that she is the one creature on earth he adores."

"Then poor Lorry, with his chummy slang and abounding good conceit of himself and all the world,—excepting this Mr. Raymond, I take it,—compares but indifferently with the smooth-spoken Rupert?"

"Lorry! He's a man! He's worth a million Fosdykes!"

Ingersoll, well pleased, adopted the sound policy of leaving well enough alone. "Still, you have given me no specific reason for your dislike of Fosdyke," he persisted.

"You read my mind too plainly, Dad," she protested, smiling vexedly. "I didn't mean to tell you, hoping matters would adjust themselves; as, indeed, they may do now, if these invaders withdraw. But Madeleine has quite lost her head over him."

"Madeleine Demoret!" Ingersoll was evidently amazed, as well he might be, seeing that Breton maids are less approachable by strangers than the girls of almost any other nationality.

"Yes, and the worst thing is that I am to blame."

"But how can that be possible?"

"Mr. Fosdyke arrived here last Saturday, and of course I was introduced to him as Mrs. Carmac's niece. The necessity for any such pretense is rather hateful, and he did not render it more acceptable by claiming me as a cousin. Really, Dad, with the slightest encouragement on my part, he would have kissed me!"

"Shocking!" said Ingersoll.

"Father dear, don't make fun of me. His cousinly kiss would have burnt my cheek."

"I can't profess fierce indignation because a young man tried to seize a good opportunity to kiss a pretty young woman."

"Well, he didn't dare make the attempt," declared Yvonne spiritedly. "He realized at once that I would have slapped his face soundly for his pains."

"But are you serious about Madeleine?"

I mean, rather, do you think she is really enamoured of him, or merely showing off for Peridot's benefit?"

"So serious that I am profoundly thankful the settled weather has kept Peridot at sea."

"Do they meet frequently?"

"I hate suspecting people, Dad; so I can only say that I don't know. Let us get away from all this worry for a day. Send Barbe for Lorry, and ask him to *déjeuner*. Then the three of us will walk out the Belon road, and have tea at the inn. It will do us a heap of good."

MRS. CARMAC, after a burst of hysterical sobbing which her nephew tried to stop by a few conventional words of sympathy, subsided into even more exasperating silence as the carriage rolled back from Nizon. Fosdyke, being an egotist, did not exert himself to console her; he was, indeed, profoundly relieved when the wretched journey came to an end. He helped his aunt to alight, but did not attempt to escort her into the annex. Instead he waited until the second carriage drove up, and Bennett appeared.

"Am I wanted for any formalities?" he inquired offhandedly.

"Not at present, Mr. Fosdyke," was the quiet answer.

"Isn't it customary that the will should be read after the funeral?"

"Yes, if it is available."

"Surely my uncle did not die intestate?" The question was shot out with a fiery eagerness that showed how joyfully any indication of the absence of a will would have been received.

"No," said Bennett, after a pause. "Mr. Carmac's will, in duplicate, is lodged in my office and at his bank. I did not bring my copy, as I had no reason to believe that events would shape themselves as they have done. But a confidential clerk is on the way with the document. He telegraphed from St. Malo this morning that he had caught a train that should reach Pont Aven about half past four this afternoon. At five o'clock, if convenient to you, I suggest that we meet in Mrs. Carmac's rooms."

Then Fosdyke knew that the gray-haired lawyer had been playing with him; but he only said airily, "Such distractions as seem to flourish in Pont Aven will probably leave me at liberty about the time you name, Mr. Bennett."

The lawyer nodded, kept a stiff upper lip, and followed Mrs. Carmac.

THE old fox! growled Fosdyke savagely, careless who heard him. "I'll bet good money he has feathered his own nest all right!"

The Mayor, the doctor, and the notary, who had descended close at hand, wondered what had put this elegant young gentleman into a temper. Raymond and Popple understood well enough, but said nothing.

"I suppose you ought to invite these local gentlemen to take a glass of wine?" suggested the secretary.

"I'll see them boiled first!" was the amiable answer.

Then Raymond, in his slow French, gave the invitation on his own behalf; but the Pont Aven men were not slow-witted, and courteously excused their further attendance.

"I've a notion that a gargle of some sort wouldn't come amiss," observed Popple thoughtfully.

"I can't drink now," fumed Fosdyke. "Raymond, a word with you!"

Raymond, however, had been furtively engaged in taking stock of Rupert Fosdyke during the last few days.

"Sorry," he said, "but our chat must be postponed. Mrs. Carmac would be exceedingly annoyed if she heard that we were inhospitable. You ought not to have spoken the way you did before those French gentlemen. It was distinctly bad form."

If a timid hare coursed by a greyhound were suddenly to turn and admonish its pursuer, the dog would hardly be more surprised than Fosdyke when this queer-looking little secretary dared to chide him. He was so completely taken aback that he laughed.

"I guess you're right," he said. "Order a bottle of champagne. I'll ask those fellows to dinner, and do them well. Then they'll forgive me. Lead on, Macduff! And cursed be he who first cries, 'Hold! Enough!'"

Fosdyke's changed mood was distinctly more agreeable. Popple, for one, deemed him a rather peppery young gentleman, but none the worse because he spoke out freely.

LIFE'S a rum thing, anyhow," said the skipper, when the three were seated in the dining room of the hotel, which was otherwise empty. "About this very hour this day week the Stella was makin' bad weather of it off some little islands north of the Aven. I wanted to put in here; but



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